

Design Resource

Traditional Pottery Making - Agartala, Tripura

Ritual Pots

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-pottery-making-agartala-tripura>



1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Traditional Pottery Making - Agartala, Tripura

Ritual Pots

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-pottery-making-agartala-tripura/introduction>

Introduction

The third-smallest state in the country, Tripura, is located in Northeast India. To its north, south, and west, it is bordered by Bangladesh and the Indian states of Assam and Mizoram to the east. Agartala, the capital of Tripura, is also the second-largest city in northeast India after Guwahati, both in municipal area and population. It is one of the fastest developing cities in India. The handicrafts of Tripura are unique and attractive. The artisan could produce extraordinary crafts from simple materials like clay, bamboo, and wood. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam are the three distinct cultures that have united together to give shape to a unique tradition found through age-old work of crafts made out of very simple materials like bamboo, clay, wood, palm leaf, etc.

One of the oldest handicrafts of India is Pottery. In the early days, clay pots, bowls, and large shells were hand-built using a simple coiling technique. Potter's wheel was invented later. People master here some of the traditional products like pots on manual potter wheels. Pottery is made by forming a ceramic body into objects of a required shape and heating them to high temperatures in a kiln, which increases their strength and setting their shape.

Pottery can be decorated before or after firing. A lump of clay must be prepared before starting some shaping process. One needs to ensure even moisture content throughout the body while kneading. Air trapped within the kneaded dough needs to be removed. The process of de-airing can be done either manually by wedging or by a machine called a vacuum pug. Wedging can also help produce an even moisture content. The clay can be given any shape by using different methods after it has been de-aired and kneaded. Once the final shape is given, it is dried and then fired in a kiln for about three to four months due to the dry season or low rainfall, so spinning is the best occupation. Gandhi saw this as the end of dependency on imported items and the best possible way to develop the masses' skills. Through this, he wished to lop the gap between the rich and the poor by developing a mechanism that acknowledges hand-labor importance.

After Independence, the Indian government established the All India Khadi and Village Industries Board, which in 1957 came to be known as the Khadi Village and Industries Commission (KVIC). There are many places in India, which are making khadi fabric. Well known among them is the Ponduru Khadi from the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Traditional Pottery Making - Agartala, Tripura

Ritual Pots

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-pottery-making-agartala-tripura/introduction>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Clay is the main raw material used to make the objects.



The ceramic plate used as a wheel for making pots.



Senior artisan explaining the making process of the pot.



Earthen pots in the process.

Design Resource

Traditional Pottery Making - Agartala, Tripura

Ritual Pots

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-pottery-making-agartala-tripura/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Tools and Raw Materials

The following are the tools and raw materials used for traditional pottery making:

- **Clay:** The basic raw material used for making pots.
- **Tray:** It is made of plaster of Paris used as potter's spinning wheel.
- **Granite Stone:** It is used for smoothening the edges of the pot.



Clay dough is the basic raw material used for pots.

Design Resource

Traditional Pottery Making - Agartala, Tripura

Ritual Pots

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-pottery-making-agartala-tripura/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



A tray made from Plaster of Paris used as a mold.



Granite stone is used for smoothing the edges, bottoms of the pot.

Design Resource

Traditional Pottery Making - Agartala, Tripura

Ritual Pots

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-pottery-making-agartala-tripura/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Making Process

Clay is squished until it's workable. You can check your clay by cutting it in half with a wire. When you cut it and don't see any air bubbles, it should be good to go. Kneading is best; you can either throw your clay at a surface or head knead it. Get the surface of your Wheel dry. Place your clay dough as close to the middle as you can. Pat the clay down into a cone shape. Center the dough by placing one hand on the side and the other on top of the clay cone. The hand on the side should push towards the middle of the wheel, and the hand on top should just keep the clay from pushing up into a mess. The trick to knowing it is centered is when the clay looks like not moving, but the wheel is moving. This step is extremely important. If your clay is not centered, it will be difficult/impossible to make a perfect pot. It is called wheel wedging, and it helps to condition the clay. Make sure it is still centered when you are done.

Also, until it makes a round hole in the clay or uses the carrot method by pressing your fingertip into the clay about an inch from the center, slowly moving into the center, this method is harder than the first. This method is not useful if you are making something thin. This is called a fishhook. Place one hand on the outside and the other one inside of the clay wall. Make sure they are directly in line with each other. Pull up the walls by starting at the base of the pot and pulling towards the top with even pressure with fingertips. Continue this process until you reach your desired height or until the walls are about a centimeter thick. Pull slower than the wheel is rotating to be even and push very lightly. This may take a while, so you have to be patient. This just takes practice to learn. Experiment with different objects; you can try patterns or pull and push different ways as long as you watch the clay for weak walls or collapsing signs. You stop the wheel, wet the wheel, not the pot, then slowly start away from taking the wire/fishing line and pull towards you until the pot is off, be careful to keep the wire down. Once footed, you use a kiln depending on the clay. Then you glaze it and fire it in the Kiln once more.

Here in this resource, the artisan is using the traditional method of making pots. She is using a plate of plaster of Paris as a spinning wheel for making the traditional pots. She scraps leftover dry clay from the plate then puts prepared clay dough in it. She slowly rotates the plate with one hand, and at the same time, she gives shape to clay dough with the other hand. She used a wet cloth for shaping the pot. Then the pot is removed very carefully using a sharp cutting tool. She gives the shape to the pot by hammering it with a hammer stone tool. Pots are kept under sunlight for drying. It takes two to three days for drying. These dried pots then heated for strength. This is how the finished products are made.

Design Resource

Traditional Pottery Making - Agartala, Tripura

Ritual Pots

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-pottery-making-agartala-tripura/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Clay is mixed thoroughly to ensure uniform consistency.



Initial process of shaping.



A wet cloth is used to create an accurate shape.

Design Resource

Traditional Pottery Making - Agartala, Tripura

Ritual Pots

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-pottery-making-agartala-tripura/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



The complete shape is obtained.



Product is removed from the tray.



The products are kept under direct sunlight to dry.



The products are fired up to eight hours in the Kiln.

Design Resource

Traditional Pottery Making - Agartala, Tripura

Ritual Pots

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-pottery-making-agartala-tripura/products>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Products

Mostly clay articles are produced for ritual purposes. Terracotta toys, pottery, vessels for storing water, and food are also made. Flowerpots, craft utilitarian items, and many such products are used for decoration purposes. The bulk purchase rates are nominal. The economy runs at its peak during summer, ironically when potters are usually less labor efficient due to extreme temperatures.



A lid of the pot.



A simple and commonly used pot.



Most commonly used household vessels.



Pots made using clay are most commonly used in villages.

Design Resource

Traditional Pottery Making - Agartala, Tripura

Ritual Pots

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-pottery-making-agartala-tripura/video>

Video



Traditional Pottery Making -
Agartala, Tripura

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Traditional Pottery Making - Agartala, Tripura

Ritual Pots

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-pottery-making-agartala-tripura/contact-details>

Contact Details

This documentation was done by Professor Bibhudutta Baral at [NID, Bengaluru](#).

You can get in touch with him at [bibhudutta\[at\]nid.edu](mailto:bibhudutta[at]nid.edu)

You can write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

Key Contacts:

Ms. Jharna Debarna
Sesrimal, Agartala, Tripura
India
Mobile: 08014694291

Helpdesk Details:

Co-ordinator
Project e-kalpa
R & D Campus
National Institute of Design
#12 HMT Link Road, Off Tumkur Road
Bengaluru 560 022
India

Phone: +91 80 2357 9054
Fax: +91 80 23373086
Email: [dsource.in\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dsource.in[at]gmail.com)

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details